

4470 a. a. 1
A
SERMON

PREACH'D in the Morning
At St DUNSTAN'S in the WEST;
And in the Afternoon
(With some Variations) at *Newgate*,
ON THE
Second Day of *September*, 1707.

BEING THE
Fast-Day for the FIRE of *London*.

K
By PAUL LORRAIN, Ordinary of *Newgate*.

Sold by B. Bragg, at the *Black Raven* in *Pater-*
Noster-Row, 1707.



Jer. v. iii. Part of the Verse.

— *Thou hast stricken them, but they have not griev'd; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refus'd to receive Correction: They have made their Faces harder than a Rock; they have refused to return.*

THE Prophet taking a Survey of the Moral and Spiritual State of the People of the *Jews*, finds them wholly corrupted; and their Circumstances to be so much the more deplorable, by how much the more they were harden'd against, and become insensible of those heavy and severe Judgments, which God had been pouring down upon them for their Perverseness and Impiety. And hereupon he declares, that those Judgments had had no effect upon them, so as to engage them to consider, that God thereby intended their Reformation and Amendment. *Thou hast stricken them (saith he) but they have not griev'd; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refus'd to receive Correction: They have made their Faces harder than a Rock; they have refused to return.*

This is the grievous Complaint which our Prophet in the Text makes of that People. But hoping they might not all of them be equally blameable, but that some might be found among them that understood better the Laws of God and their own Duties, and would therefore hearken to him, he in the two next following Verses, upbraids those Stubborn and Inconsiderate Men with Ignorance and Foolishness, and supposes the others to be Men of Sense and Understanding, that would readily apprehend what it so highly concerned them both to know and yield to, *viz.* God's Admonitions to them by his Judgments; and so be made wiser and better by them: As you may see in the 4th and 5th Verses of this Chapter; where he thus expresses himself. *Therefore, I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish, for they know not the Way of the Lord, nor the Judgment of their God. I will get me unto the Great Men, and will speak unto them, for they have known the way of the Lord, and the*



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Judgment of their God ; but these have altogether broken the Yoke, and burst the Bonds.

Thus the Prophet expected to find among those of his People that were of better Fashion than the rest, some Men of Understanding, that would seriously consider, what God truly intends by his Judgments upon the Children of Men. But herein our Prophet was disappointed. He could find none, or at least but few, even among the best of them, that *would understand and seek after God ;* that would justly improve his Dispensations towards them, and amend themselves under his correcting Hand.

And is not this the Case with many of us ? I leave you to judge whether all the Judgments in general, which the Almighty has from time to time sent upon this Church and Nation ; or this particular Judgment, which we commemorate this Day ; I mean, that dreadful Fire, by which this opulent and flourishing City was (about 41 Years ago) consumed to Ashes, presenting then the Spectators with a Scene of Horror, Confusion and Misery ; who saw their Dear Friends and Relations, and Country-men, some utterly ruin'd in their Estates, some wounded in their Bodies, and others wholly swallow'd up and perish under the Rubbish, or in the Flames ; and the rest in a sad Consternation : I say, I leave you to judge, whether this, or any other of God's Judgments inflicted upon you or yours, have truly wrought in your Hearts that *Repentance which is not to be repented of*, and that earnest desire and endeavour of Serving God acceptably, which may prevent, or at least in due time remove all Calamities, and replenish our Souls (under all Circumstances whatsoever) with unspeakable Joy and Comfort.

This City (blessed be God) though once burnt to Ashes, has (like a *Phoenix*) admirably reviv'd, and is now rais'd to a greater Glory and Magnificence, than it ever was before.

But may not we enquire whether her Inhabitants, are not (in a great measure) still lying in the old Rubbish of their Sins ? I wish we could find it otherwise. But alas ! It is too too plain, That Wickedness and Impiety is rais'd to a very high degree among us. I know that Complaints are very uneasy, tho never so just. But what would you have me to say ? Would you have me to tell you, who are now come hither in an extraordinary manner to humble your selves before God, and implore his Mercy and the Pardon of your Sins ; would you, (I say) have me to tell you, That you have no Sin to repent of ? But may ye not rather be told, That from the little Effects which former Judgments seem yet to have had upon us, and from the general Corruption and Backwardness to Amendment of Life, so visible among us, we have too just Cause to fear the Anger of the Lord, and his making this Complaint of us, as he did of the

Jews

Jews by his Prophet in the Text, I have stricken them, but they have not griev'd, &c.

And what renders both our Guilt and Misery still greater, is, That this is not done only by the poorer and meaner sort that are ignorant, and have not so much Opportunity and Ability of *knowing the Ways of God*, as those of better Circumstances and of a higher Station in the World may have; but 'tis done even by these latter, who have Capacity, and are wise and understanding enough in other Matters, though at the same time they are willing to be as ignorant and unconcern'd in this, as those are who seem to be destitute of the means of Knowledge; and who therefore are apt to govern themselves by the Example of such, as they look upon to have had a better Education, or to be in other respects their Superiors.

Now, that God expects that Men of Parts and Ability shou'd be the first in considering and understanding his Judgments and his Ways, and should teach them others, is beyond all Dispute. But I am afraid that many of them *have also broken the Yoke, and burst the Bonds.*

In the Words before us we have these three Things, which may be observed.

I. *A great Sin which the Prophet complain'd of, and that was Incorrigibleness and Impenitency in the JEWS under God's Judgments. THOU HAST STRICKEN THEM, &c.* Nay we may here further observe, *That they were not only Incorrigible and Impenitent, but Obstinate and Impudent: THEY HAVE MADE THEIR FACES HARDER THAN A ROCK. &c.*

II. *The Excuse which the Prophet thought to have made for them, to lessen their Sin, and extenuate their Guilt: hoping (upon Search and Examination) to find, that these were only ignorant People that did not understand the Ways of the Lord: And so, being a Sin of Ignorance, it might not be altogether so heinous. But,*

III. *The Frustration and Disappointment which the Prophet met with; who as soon as he was come into the Gates and chief Places of the City, and had look'd among the Great Men, the Governours, Rulers and Priests, he found that they were all of them involv'd in the same Guilt; HAVING REFUS'D TO RECEIVE CORRECTION, AND BROKEN THE YOKE, AND BURST THE BONDS.*

These are the three Principal Observables from the Text and Context.

But to make the Words still more applicable to the Business of this Day, they may (and that very naturally) be consider'd under these Four Heads.

I. *Who is the Great Author and Principal and Efficient Cause of all the Judgments, all the Evils and Calamities, that fall upon Men. And that is God.*

II. *The Expectation of God from those whom he thus visits with Judgments, whether inflicted upon themselves, or on their Friends and Neighbours, and that is ; That they should grieve and receive Correction ; That they should repent of their Sins, and turn to Him.*

III. *What they may look for at God's Hand, who refuse to receive and improve Correction, and are not softened, but rather harden'd by his Judgments.*

IV. *and lastly, The Aggravation of Sin, when it is universal, and not only found among the poor and foolish, and ignorant, who may be thought not to know the Ways of the Lord ; but when found among the better sort, whose greater Capacities render them so much the more unexcusable for their not having, or not improving this Knowledge*

This renders a Nation ripe for Judgment.

Of these in their Order, and as briefly as I can. And,

I. *I am to shew you, That God Almighty is the Author and Efficient Cause of every Judgment.*

'Tis what God himself owns in the Sacred Pages, as in *Jer. 18. 12. Behold, I the Lord frame Evil against you : And in Isai. 45. 7. I frame the Light, and create Darknes ; I make Peace, and create Evil : I the Lord do all these things.* So we see the Prophet *Amos, Ch. 3. 6.* denouncing God's Judgments against *Israel*, puts this Question, *Shall there be evil in a City and the Lord has not done it ?* intimating thereby, that all Evils of Punishment come from God. They are his Rods of Correction to reform the World.

The Judgments wherewith God has chiefly and more remarkably in former days visited this City, were of two sorts, viz. the Plague and the Fire. Both very dreadful, and both sent almost at the same time ; yet not for the utter Destruction, but the wish'd-for Through-Reformation of its Inhabitants. God never inflicts any Punishment upon Men but for a good End, and particularly for their great advantage and benefit on whom it is inflicted.

Therefore we ought always to acknowledg the Goodness of God in all his Dispensations towards us. We ought never to allow ourselves the liberty of murmuring against God, or his Vice-gerents, like the impatient and stiff-neck'd People of *Israel*, who so often rebell'd against the Lord, and against his Servant *Moses*, as we find in the Scripture-History they did, and were therefore
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severely plagu'd. But we ought to consider well, that when God withdraws from us those good Things, which by his Merciful Providence we formerly enjoy'd ; or when He thinks fit (for Reasons best known to Himself) to disappoint us of any of our Expectations, whether Publick or Private ; our Duty is submissively to acquiesce therein, and resign up our Wills to his Will : And as Holy Job said (when he received the sad News, *That the Sabeans and Chaldeans had spoil'd and plunder'd his Goods and slain his Servants ; and that a Fire from Heaven had consum'd a part of his Substance ;* and to render this still more melancholy, *That his Sons and Daughters were kill'd by the sudden fall of the House, wherein they were then feasting ;* As he then said, so should we say, *The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away : Blessed be the Name of the Lord : Job. 1. 15. &c.* And this Submission and Acknowledgment we should make with the Prophet Micah. 7. 9. *We will bear the Indignation of the Lord, because we have sinned against Him.*

And indeed it is very reasonable that we should do so ; considering, that no Calamity befalls us at any time, either by accident, or unjust Designs, or otherwise, but by the Wise and Just Providence of God, that rules and governs all Men and all Things, as may be best conducive to his Glory, and the Spiritual, if not always Temporal Welfare of them that love him, and keep his Commandments. *All things (saith the Apostle, Rom. 8. 28.) work together for good to them that love God.*

Though God is the Author and Efficient Cause of those Judgments, that in some sort or other, fall upon Men ; yet it is their own Sins that are the principal or provoking Cause : *For which things sake the Wrath of God comes upon the Children of Disobedience. Col. 3. 6.*

You know that God drowned the Old World ; because (as the Scripture tells us) *all Flesh had corrupted his way upon the Earth. Gen. 6. 12* And he destroy'd the Cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and consumed their Inhabitants with Fire from Heaven ; *Because their cry was great, and their Sin very grievous. Gen. 18. 20.*

Neither are you (I suppose) ignorant, how that the once flourishing Churches of Asia, that were dedicated to God, did so provoke Him by their Sins, that He cast them off, and gave them up to Turks and Infidels ; under whose Power and Tyranny they remain to this Day.

Now one would think, that these and other such remarkable Instances of God's Justice upon impenitent Sinners, and bold Contemners of his Laws, should mightily startle us and awaken us from our Sins ; and make us to consider, That tho' God has hitherto been graciously pleas'd to spare us, so as to remember Mercy whilst He was pouring down his Fiery Indignation upon us ; Yet we should by no means think ourselves secure in our Iniquities, and take the liberty of Sinning-on, because we know that *his Compassions fail not.*

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Every Sin that we do willfully commit is an open Act of Hostility and Rebellion against the supream Monarch of the whole World. 'Tis no less than a bold disclaiming of our Dependance on Him: 'Tis a renouncing of our Subjection to his Sovereignty, and a throwing off that Allegiance which we indispensably owe to Him. And the Language of every Sinner is, *Nolumus hunc regnare: We will not have this (King) to reign over us*

It is, Sin, and nothing else, that brought all Tumults, and Disorder, all Confusion, and all Mischief; in a Word, all manner of Evil, into the World.

When God at first did make all things; *Behold they were very good.* Gen. 1. 32. But when Sin came into the World it undid what God had done: Or at least would strive to alter and spoil every thing, and subvert the whole Creation.

History (both Sacred and Profane) furnishes us with amazing, and no less instructive Instances of God's Overthrowing Cities, nay whole Kingdoms and Nations for the Sins of Men: And the Royal Prophet *David* plainly tells us, *Psal.* 107. 34, *That God makes a fruitful Land barren for the Wickedness of them that dwell therein.*

So great a Hatred God has declar'd and shewn against Sin, that he sent his Only-Begotten Son into the World to make Expiation for it with his own most precious Blood: And by his Holy Spirit, and the Ministry of his Word, He is continually making War against Sin; Yet Sin lives, and reigns still, and braves it in the Sight of Heaven.

When Sin had over-run the whole World, and Men were arriv'd to the height of Wickedness, *God repented Him that He had made* such a thing as *Man*; and therefore resolv'd to drown the World; and to that end poured down a Deluge of Water, as *Moses* describes it in the 7th Chapter of *Genesis*. And yet when the World was drown'd, Sin escap'd and crept into the Ark.

So when God try'd to destroy Sin by Fire, consuming *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, and yet saving *Lot*, a good Man; out of his Loins descended a Spurious Off-spring, who in Process of time prov'd great Enemies to God's People and Religion.

Neither Fire nor Water have hitherto been able to prevail against Sin. It is reserv'd to be finally destroy'd in the World by that Universal Fire, of which the Apostle speaks, *2. Pet.* 3. 7.

I pass now to the next Thing to be consider'd: Which is,

II. *The Expectation of Almighty God from those whom He thus visits with his Judgments; viz. That they should grieve and receive Correction; that is, in other Terms, That they should repent of their Sins, and utterly forsake them.*

The great Design of the Divine Providence in all his Judgments (as I have already intimated) is the Reformation of Mankind. And therefore they were seldom or never sent, but after they

they had long before been denounc'd; to the end that they might be averted by Repentance, as we see it was in the case of *Nineveh*, *Jon.* 3. 5. For God does not delight to afflict the Children of Men, *Lam.* 3. 33. That is call'd in Scripture, *Isa.* 28. 21. *His strange Work*; which our Sins put Him upon. But his Property is ever to have Mercy and to forgive. This is the usual and familiar Work of a Gracious God and Merciful Father; Who desires not the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he may turn from his Wickedness and live. Which most comfortable, most gracious and most inviting Declaration, He has made every where in his Sacred Word, by the Mouth of his Holy Servants, the Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles, and more especially by his own Son, who dy'd to this very End and Purpose, *That we might be sav'd*: And do's even to this Day by his Ministers, proclaim Pardon and Forgiveness to all those that do truly and earnestly repent of their Sins, and intend to lead a New Life.

Look into your Bibles, and you will see how God, when He punishes Men for disobeying his Commands, soon takes away his Judgments upon their Repentance.

Of this the Prophet *Jeremiah* gives us a most excellent View, in the 18th Chap. of his Prophecy at the 7th and following Verses. *At what instant* (saith God by our Prophet) *I shall speak concerning a Nation and concerning a Kingdom to pluck up and to pull down, and to destroy it; If that Nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their Evil, I will repent of the Evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a Nation and concerning a Kingdom to build and to plant it: If it do evil in my sight and it obey not my Voice; then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.*

And so he proceeds in these Words. *Now therefore go to, speak to the Men of Judah, and to the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying; Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I frame Evil against you, and devise a Device against you: Return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.*

From all which it evidently appears, That God on his part is always ready to forgive, if we were but so on ours to repent. He never threaten'd to punish Men with Judgments, but He had Mercy in reserve for them in case of Repentance. We have a great instance of this in the Book of *Judge*. Chap. 10. at the 11th and following Verses; where this stands upon Record *The Lord said unto the Children of Israel, Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, &c. yet you have forsaken me, and served other Gods. Wherefore I will deliver you no more. Go, and cry to the Gods which you have chosen, and let them deliver you.*

Who would not now conclude this People in a lost State? But see what follows upon their Repentance, at the 16th Verse. *And they put away the strange Gods from among them, and served the Lord: And his Soul was griev'd for the Misery of Israel. i. e. They alter'd*

alter'd their former ill Course of Life ; and God thereupon revers'd the Sentence of their Destruction.

But to come nearer home. The Judgments of God, which you have seen or heard of, or felt, or may feel, they are all of them good Lessons and Moral Arguments to teach and incite you, and ought to be effectual Means to perswade you, speedily to repent. *The Rod, saith Solomon, teaches Wisdom.*

If then we know, that God sends his Judgments for our Correction and Instruction, and that He takes them away upon our Repentance ; Oh ! then let us all repent and amend our Lives. *Let us (as the Prophet exhorts, Isai. 55. 6. and 7.) return unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon us, and unto our God, for He will abundantly pardon. Let us seek him while He may be found ; Let us call upon Him while he is near ;* And let us hear Him, when He calls upon us to repent. Let us obey his Voice : And know this, That if we will not hearken to Him ; but still follow our Evil Imaginations, and shew ourselves obstinate in our Sins, and unwilling to be reform'd, we may be sure, that though God is long-suffering, yet he will not always suffer. *There is a Day of Vengeance in God's Heart, saith the Prophet, Isai. 63. 4.*

And who can tell, that our being so long preserv'd, is not in order to our future Judgment, and to aggravate our own Condemnation. As we still hope to escape, let us be advis'd before it be too late ; *not to refuse Instruction.*

I hope God has not pass'd this Sentence on us, as to say, as in *Ezek. 14. 14. tho' Noah, Job, and Daniel were here, yet they would save none but themselves :* For I trust here is a Remnant of God's People ; yea Thousands of good and pious Souls (I make no doubt) there are in this great City, that like so many *Moses's, stand in the gap of God's Vengeance and fiery Indignation.*

I now hasten to the next General : Which is to shew you,

III. *What they may look for at God's Hand, who are not better'd by his Judgments ; but still obstinately refuse to return to Him.*

And to this I shall subjoin, the noting to you,

IV. and Lastly, *The Aggravation of Sin, when it is Universal, and not only found among the Poor, or Foolish, and Ignorant, who may be thought not to know the way of the Lord ; but when found even among the better Sort, who by reason of their Education, or higher Station in the World, are less excusable for their Neglect herein.*

These two General Heads, I shall for Brevity-sake, consider under one ; intending to be now very short.

And if I should seem to be too prolix, I hope you will for once forgive me ; for you know, that the chief Business of this Day, is to Fast and Pray ; To meditate upon God's Word ; To talk and hear of his Judgments and Mercies ; And that all this is to be done

done not only in private, but in publick; not only at Home, but chiefly at Church. When you consider this, I am greatly confident, that you will patiently suffer me to go on in what I have further to say upon this Subject.

When Men will not open their Eyes to God's Judgments: When a Nation, and the Better Sort of them, will not take notice either of private, or publick Calamities and Disasters; of Divine Chastisements and Warnings, so as to be by them thoroughly awaken'd from Sin: Then may they be said to be in a Spiritual Lethargy; in a most stupid, most sad and deplorable Condition.

'Tis that obdurate State and universal Impiety, which brought upon the Old World that general Flood I was now speaking of; wherein but eight Persons were saved: And yet among those eight Persons, who were Eye-Witnesses of God's terrible Vengeance upon Sinners, there was found a cursed *Cham*, who with his Corruption reviv'd all Injustice and Wickedness.

The People of *Israel* being hard to be wrought upon, and brought into Reformation and Obedience by former Judgments, endur'd even sorer ones in that good Land of *Canaan* (where God intended to have blessed them) than they had undergone before both in *Egypt* and in the *Wilderness*. And as they were no sooner deliver'd out of Misery, but they return'd again to their Folly, like the *Dog to his Vomit*, and the *Sow to her Wallowing in the Mire*, (2 Pet. 2. 2) and became universally guilty of Pride, Luxury, and all manner Impiety: So God at last gave them up to Ruin and utter Desolation.

But why do I mention these, when I need not go so far for Instances of Divine Judgments upon a People?

God has formerly try'd us of this Nation for several Years together, with his sorest Judgments; some time with the *Plague* and the *Fire*; at other times with *Famine*; and now with the *Sword* (To mention particulars is unpleasant:) But alas! where-in does it appear, that we are made better and more Religious by all these Chastisements? Are we not at this day as Covetous, and as Proud, and as Earthly-minded as ever we were? And is there less Swearing, Drunkenness, Profaneness and Uncleaness, than heretofore among us? Are we not still unjust, uncharitable, revengeful, and the like? Oh! where is that Spirit of Christianity that so much adorn'd the Lives of the first Professors of our Holy Religion? 'Tis even quite lost: Scarcely to be found among Christians now adays! Oh! let us resume it: Or else, what can we think will become of us? Can we reasonably expect ever to remain unpunish'd in our continu'd Impieties? Shall we urge God to say of us, as he once did of his ancient People the *Jews*, in *Isai. 65. 2. 3. I spread out my Hands all the day unto a rebellious People, which walketh in a way that is not good, after their own Thoughts: A People that provoketh me to Anger continually to my Face.* And in *Jer. 8. 7, 8. I hearken'd and heard; but*

But no Man repented of his Wickedness, saying, What have I done? But every one turned to his Course, as the Horse rusheth to the Battle, &c.

There is no Sin (doubtless) but is very great, because it offends the High Majesty of God, and is a Breach of his Divine Laws : But the despising of his Judgments is certainly a Sin of the first Magnitude. For *when his Judgments, are abroad in the Earth, 'tis to the intent that the Inhabitants of the World should learn Righteousness,* as the Prophet elegantly teaches us. *Isai. 26. 9.*

To persist in a Sinful Course of Life after Signal and Exemplary Judgments, such as we have seen or heard of, is an Argument of a profane Atheistical Spirit, that will not consider, That while Man is thus provoking God, *God is whetting his Sword, and bending his Bow, and preparing for him the Instruments of Death,* as David speaks, *Psal. 7. 12.* And though (for the most part) God's Judgments come but slowly, yet they are sure : They will most certainly come upon Men unless they do repent And when they are once come, then will they prove the heavier and more intolerable, by how much the longer they were in coming.

Let us not vainly flatter ourselves, saying, *Peace, peace, where there is no peace; For there is no peace, says my God, to the Wicked. Isai. 57. 21.*

If we presume to go on in our Sins, after God's striving by his Corrections to reclaim us, we can hardly hope for Pardon; tho we should afterwards seek it never so carefully with Tears. Read what is said of such Sinners as are hardened in their Sins, and deaf to God's Admonitions to Humility and Repentance. *Jer. 22. 12, 13, 14.* *And in that Day did the Lord God of Hosts call to weeping, mourning, baldness, and Sackcloth; and behold joy and gladness, slaying Oxen, and killing Sheep. Surely this iniquity shall not be purg'd from you, till you die, saith the Lord of Hosts—: God compares Jerusalem to a Pot, and the Inhabitants to Flesh boiling therein, shewing, That all the Boiling will not fetch out the Scum. Therefore, saith the Lord, in thy filthiness is lewdness : Because I purg'd thee, and thou wast not purg'd; thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee, Ezek. 24. 13.*

It Judgments already felt do not affright us into Repentance, it cannot be hop'd, but that God will bring new ones (sorer and heavier) upon us; as we see He threatned he would do to his own (once peculiar) People Israel; *Levit. 26.* from the 16th to the 25th Verse. *I brought you, saith the Lord, out of the Land of Egypt: And now, if ye will not hearken unto me; but despise my Statutes and abhor my Judgments, I will do this unto you. I will appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning Ague, that shall consume the Eyes, and cause sorrow of Heart; and ye shall sow your Seed in vain, for your Enemies shall eat it, &c.*

In short, if we continue and still delight in our Sins: If we will obstinately oppose God's Endeavours of reforming us: If we
will

will take no notice, but be (as it were) wholly insensible of his Judgments, either past, or present, or threaten'd to come: If all the Methods which God has already us'd, or uses now, or may please further to use, to bring us back from our evil ways, have not their due Effects upon us, we cannot expect to escape; we cannot hope for Salvation. He will at last give us over to our hardness and impenitent heart. as the Apostle speaks, *Rom. 2. 5.* Than which, nothing more dismal can ever befall us.

It was this sad Condition the *Jews* had even brought themselves into; which *David* thus describes, *Psal. 81*, the 10th and following Verses. *I brought thee* (saith God to that People) *out of the Land of Egypt: Open thy Mouth wide, and I will fill it. But my People would not hearken to my Voice, and Israel would have none of me:* (or, as we have it in another Translation, *Israel would not obey me*) *So I gave them up to their own Hearts Lust; and they walked in their own Counsels.* This is the Catastrophe, the miserable End of Men that are universally corrupted, and will not take warning in due time, so as to learn Wisdom, and be reform'd; and thereby prevent their final Destruction.

I hope the Case is not altogether so bad with us, as it was with the *Jews*, when God thus exclaim'd against their general Injustice and Ungodliness in all sorts and ranks among them, in the Chapter of the Text, at the 1st Verse. *Run ye to and fro through the Streets of Jerusalem, and see if ye can find a Man, if there be any that seeks the Truth, and I will pardon it.*

I trust, we are not reduc'd to this deplorable State of having so very few among us (as it seems there were then in *Judah*) that fear the Lord and tremble at his Judgments. And yet I can't but confess that the Character of that People, does too much belong to us, as the Prophet *Isaiab* represents it, Chap. 1. 4, 5, 6. in these emphatick, but most lamentable Accents (which you have now heard out of the first Lesson) *Ah! Sinful Nation, a People laden with Iniquity, Children that are Corrupters. They have forsaken the Lord; They have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger: They are gone away backward. Why should you be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more: The whole Head is sick, and the whole Heart faint — &c.*

Be ye therefore exhorted in the Words of the same Prophet as they follow at the 16th and 17th Verses of that Chapter. *Wash ye, make you clean; put away your doings from before mine Eyes: Cease to do evil: Learn to do well. Relieve the Oppressed: Judge the Fatherless: Plead for the Widow,*

The Conclusion at St Dunstan's

To Conclude.

Give me leave to recommend to you, upon this solemn Occasion, a most excellent and practicable Duty, which God requires of you, especially at this Day ; and that is, your free and charitable Beneficence to the Poor.

You ought to remember, how God, in the midst of his Judgments, has been pleas'd to spare you and yours. Therefore you should be so much the more bountiful to your poor Neighbours.

I do not here intend to press you to a Charity, which perhaps Custom or Decency, or some other Worldly Considerations only, might extort from you, even to your own Uneasiness and Inconvenience. No ; God will in such case, accept of the Will for the Deed ; He requiring no more of you, than you are able to do. But you must not excuse your selves from doing what you can herein. And pray consider, (and suffer your selves to be mov'd by the Consideration) That God having, as on this Day, brought many wealthy Persons and Families in this fam'd City upon the very brink of Ruin, and afterwards, in the Riches of his Mercy, restored them double, and perhaps more than double and treble of what he had then taken away, as I hope it is with many of you and of your Friends this day : He expects, that you should now express your gratitude for this to Him, by your Charitable Contributions towards the relief of the Needy ; especially such Families as you may know (and no doubt but you know some, and perhaps many) that have been Fellow-Sufferers with your selves or Parents in that Publick Calamity ; but have not had the same Temporal Blessing, as to be rais'd again with you to a flourishing State in the World.

Now in this Act of Charity, which I here endeavour to recommend to you, your selves (who best know your own Circumstances) are to be your own impartial Judges. And if you desire more and more to prosper and abound, let me desire you and perswade you by no means to keep back in your hands, what your own Conscience tells you, you should impart to the poor Members of Christ : For besides the many present Advantages, which you shall reap from it, even in this World, what a great Comfort will it be to you at the last Day, which shall be a Day (indeed) of Terror and Trouble and Confusion to the Covetous and Uncharitable, who then shall be cast away with that dreadful Sentence, *Depart from me* : But a Day of Joy and Bliss and Reward to the Merciful and Charitable, who with their Substance have kept many a poor Brother and Sister of their Blessed Saviour's from starving and perishing ? I say, What unexpressible Comfort will it be to your Souls on that great and solemn Day, when the Eternal Son of God shall appear in his Glory, attended with *Myriads*, nay, with Ten Thousand times Ten Thousands of Angels, and shall then say to you, (*Mat. 25. 34. &c.*) *Come ye Blessed of my Father,*
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inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World. For I was an hungred, and you gave me Meat : I was thirsty, and you gave me Drink, &c. ? And when your Modesty and Humility shall put this Question to your Saviour ; Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee ; or thirsty, and gave thee Drink ? He shall then openly profess, That inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of your poor Fellow-Creatures, (whom He is not ashamed to call his Brethren) you did unto Himself.

Now, what can I say more to persuade you to the Practice of this excellent Duty, which is so comfortable in itself, so honorable in its Object, and so secure of an everlasting Reward ? This is better, yea infinitely better than Thousands of Gold and Silver ; than all the Treasures of the Indies ; than all the Wealth of the whole World.

And now the God of all Mercy, the Author and Giver of all good Things, preserve and keep both you and yours ; Graft in all your Hearts the Love of his great Name ; Encrease in you true Religion ; Nourish and replenish you with all Goodness ; and of his infinite Mercy, keep you in the lasting Enjoyment of the same, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord.

To whom with the Father, and the Holy Spirit of Grace, be ascribed, as is most due, both by us and the whole World, all Honour, and Glory, and Praise, Love, Obedience, and Adoration, from this time forth, and to all Ages of Eternity. AMEN.

The Conclusion at Newgate.

To conclude.

You have greatly sinned against God : You have many and many ways transgressed his Holy Laws and Commandments ; you have provoked Him to anger. And therefore he hath stricken you : He has brought those Troubles upon you, which (no doubt) are very grievous to your Flesh.

Now if upon this striking, your Spirits are not grieved, and you do not return to God, your Miseries will still encrease more and more, and become at last unremovable. Both your Bodies and Immortal Souls will be undone ; undone to all Eternity. Oh ! seek then a Reconciliation with God, and dwell no longer in your Sins : Cast off the weighty Load of your Iniquities, which if you continue to carry about you, must needs sink you into the Depth of Hell. And what pleasure can you find in making your selves miserable for ever ? Oh ! let me persuade you to avoid Eternal Torments, and to regain the Favour of God, which you have lost by your repeated Sins, and continued Offences against Him.

Let me beseech you to *cleanse your selves from all Unrighteousness and Filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit*, as the Apostle speaks (2. Cor. 7. 1.) To repent truly and heartily of all your Sins past, and resolve to lead a new Life. And to this end, let me advise you by all that is great and good, Sacred and Holy ; by all that is nearest and dearest

Dearest to you, even your own Immortal Souls, and Eternal Salvation. That you would apply your selves (in fervent Prayers) to God for his Grace; by which, and by which alone, you can be enabled to overcome your natural Corruption, and all sinful desires of the Flesh. And that those of you particularly, who have little ground to hope for a long Life here, would earnestly endeavour to obtain the Favour of God, which is infinitely *better than Life itself*; Psal 63, 3. And in a Word, that you would, every one of you, devoutly and constantly beg of Him so to sanctify these your Temporal Afflictions, that they may at last turn to your Spiritual and Eternal Good.

But oh! How remiss: How negligent, and backward do I find you (for the most part) in this great and most necessary Duty of Prayer! How hard a thing is it to make you sensible of this Truth, That there is nothing in the whole World of greater Use and Benefit to you, (especially under your present dismal Circumstances) than a hearty diligent and unwearied seeking after God's Mercy and Grace, by ardent, earnest, and devout Prayer.

This would most certainly allay your present Troubles, and avert future and endless Torments. What? Will you always live as if there were no God in the World, and no Reward to be hoped for, or Punishment to be dreaded after this Life? And will you be such Foolhardies, as to venture to die in this Atheistical and Soul-undoing Opinion? Pray stifle not the Thoughts of Eternity, which must needs arise in your Hearts, from a serious Consideration of your selves. Think often (and that seriously, as a thing of infinite Moment) Think, I say, of the endless Life, either of Weal or Woe, which is to follow immediately after this; and act accordingly. Awake out of your Spiritual Slumber; fall upon the Work of your Eternal Salvation, and *redeem the time; because the days are evil*; Ephes. 5. 16. and, perhaps, to some of you but few. Improve them therefore to the best Advantage, that both while you live, and when you come to die, you may have Comfort in your Souls, and enjoy the blessed Fruits of that Peace of God, which passes all Understanding; which is *That* which the World can neither give, nor take away, and which I heartily pray God to bestow upon every one of you here present, and upon all those that love the Lord *JESUS CHRIST* in sincerity and truth. *Amen.*

Now to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, one ever Living and Immortal God, be rendred all Honour and Glory, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, Love and Obedience, both now and ever. *AMEN.*

Grant, we beseech Thee Almighty God, that we who for our evil Deeds, do worthily deserve to be punished, by the comfort of thy Grace may mercifully be relieved, through our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. AMEN.

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